

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8386

INFO USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 02892

SG 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MX

SUBJECT: US-LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY RELATIONS

REF: STATE 306726 (NOTAL)

1. BY REF, EMBASSY'S VIEWS REGARDING U.S. INTERESTS AND CAPABILITIES IN CONTINUING TIES TO THE MEXICAN MILITARY WERE REQUESTED. RESPONSE, KEYED TO QUESTIONS OF PARAGRAPH 2 OF REF, ARE PROVIDED AS FOLLOWS. AMBASSADOR HAS APPROVED THIS MESSAGE.

A(1). THE VALUE OF U.S. TIES MUST BE EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF THE ROLE OF THE MEXICAN MILITARY WITHIN THE GOM. ALTHOUGH QUITE DOMINANT AT TIMES IN MEXICAN HISTORY, THE CURRENT ROLE OF THE MEXICAN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IS THAT OF AN IMPORTANTBUTSUBSIDIARY FORCE IN NATIONAL DECISION-MAKING THAT IS BECOMING MORE IMPORTANT AS ITS ROLE IS READJUSTED BY PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO. THE ARMY AND NAVY SECRETARIES ARE ACTIVE MILITARY AND NAVAL OFFICERS WHO, IF NOT POLITICALLY ACTIVE, ARE SENSITIVE TO POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS. THE POLITICAL DEMEANOR OF THE OFFICER CORPS IS CONSERVATIVE AND TENDS TO BE SUPPORTIVE OF THE PRESI-  
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DENT. IN RECENT MONTHS, THE MEXICAN ARMY HAS PLAYED A HIGHLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN MARIJUANA AND POPPY ERADICATION PROGRAMS AND IN EFFORTS TO CLEAN UP THE NARCOTICS/LAW AND ORDER SITUATION IN THE STATE OF SINALOA. CONTINUING MEXICAN ARMY COOPERATION IN THE NARCOTICS PROGRAM IS VIEWED AS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE BY THE MEXICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL AND OTHER GOM ELEMENTS. WE AGREE WITH

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MEXICAN ARMY CONTRIBUTION IN THIS PROGRAM AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE ITS CONTINUANCE. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO CONTROL ITS PEOPLE EVER BE PLACED IN SERIOUS DOUBT, THE ARMY REMAINS THE ONLY CREDIBLE FORCE CAPABLE OF MAINTAINING ORDER AND WOULD MOST PROBABLY, UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, ASSUME A MAJOR ROLE IN MAINTAINING THE STABILITY OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT.

A(2). AT PRESENT, FORMAL U.S. MILITARY TIES WITH THE MEXICAN ARMY AND NAVY ARE LIMITED TO THOSE OF THE DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE MEXICO, AND THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE COORDINATION OFFICE STAFFED BY ONE ADMINISTRATOR FROM U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND AND SUPERVISED BY USDAO PERSONNEL. IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE MEXICAN ARMY AND NAVY PLAY A BACKGROUND ROLE IN THE MEXICAN GOVT, THESE TIES ARE CONSIDERED IMPORTANT, BUT NOT CRITICAL IN OVERALL U.S. RELATIONS. HOWEVER, AS THE ABOVE SCENARIOS POSTULATES, SHOULD THE CIVILIAN GOVT BE PRESENTED WITH THREATS WHICH UNDERMINE ITS ABILITY TO CONTROL THE COUNTRY, THE MEXICAN MILITARY WOULD RAPIDLY ASSUME A MUCH MORE CRUCIAL AND EVEN VISIBLE ROLE. IN THIS EVENT, U.S./MEXICAN MILITARY TIES WOULD LOOM LARGE IN OUR OVERALL GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIPS.

B. USG/GOM RELATIONS HAVE IMPROVED SINCE THE  
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LOPEZ PORTILLO (AND CARTER) ADMINISTRATIONS ENTERED OFFICE. CERTAINLY, THERE REMAIN SEVERAL THORNY ISSUES WHICH COULD TURN OUR RELATIONS SOUR, BUT THUS FAR, THE GOM HAS SOUGHT COOPERATION INSTEAD OF CONFRONTATION, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF ITS PERCEIVED INTERESTS, OF COURSE, IN ADDRESSING THOSE ISSUES. ON OTHERS, LIKE ANTI-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS, THE GOM'S EFFORTS HAVE BEEN EXCEPTIONAL. IN THE MAIN, ON THE FORMAL OFFICIAL LEVEL, THE MEXICAN MILITARY SHAPES ITS RELATIONSHIPS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PREVAILING GOM TRENDS. THUS, UNLIKE HIS PREDECESSOR, THE CURRENT MEXSECDEF, LTG FELIX GALVAN LOPEZ, HAS BEEN MORE ACCESSIBLE TO THE U.S. DEFENSE ATTACHE AND HAS SHOWN A WILLINGNESS TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES. AS DETAILNHQBC SEPARATE MESSAGES, EMBASSY POSITION IS THAT THE INVITATION TO SECDEF SHOULD BE FOLLOWED UP ACTIVELY AND DATE FIRMED UP AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY, EVEN THOUGH VISIT IS NOT PRESENTLY SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE UNTIL LATER THIS CALENDAR YEAR. ON THE SERVICE-TO-SERVICE OFFICIAL LEVEL, THE MEXICAN NAVY HAS TRADITIONALLY (SINCE WORLD WAR II) BEEN MORE OPEN AND FRIENDLY TO THE U.S. NAVY THAN THE MEXICAN NATIONAL DEFENSE HIERARCHY, WHICH INCLUDES BOTH THE ARMY AND THE AIR FORCE, HAS BEEN TO ITS

COUNTERPARTS. DESPITE THAT, HOWEVER, BELOW THE FORMAL VENEER, THE MEXICAN MILITARY FEELS CLOSE TO THE U.S. SINCE MUCH OF ITS CURRENT EQUIPMENT, TRAINING, AND DOCTRINE IS OF AMERICAN ORIGIN. HOW THE HOST GOVT VIEWS MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE U.S. IS SHAPED BY MANY COMPLEX FACTORS WHICH DERIVE LARGELY FROM THE HISTORICAL UPS AND DOWNS EXPERIENCED BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES AND THE MEXICAN VIEW OF THE ROLE OF ITS OWN MILITARY. IN SHORT, MEXICO DOES NOT WANT TO GET SO CLOSE TO US MILITARILY THAT ITS FOREIGN POLICY MIGHT BE INFLUENCED, IN-SO-FAR-AS MEXICO MIGHT PERCEIVE IT. YET IT APPEARS THAT THE GOM

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8387  
INFO USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MEXICO 02892

VIEWS RELATIVELY OPEN AND FRIENDLY MILITARY TIES WITH THE U.S. AS CONSISTENT WITH ITS LONG TERM INTERESTS.

C. IN THE NEAR TERM, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT THE MODEST SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BE CONTINUED AT THE CURRENT LEVEL (\$200 THOUSAND PER YEAR) AND RAISED PERIODICALLY OVER THE MID-TERM, CONSISTENT WITH INFLATION, TO PROVIDE A CONSTANT LEVEL OF TRAINING FOR MEXICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL.

D. THE MEXICAN MILITARY CURRENTLY DEPENDS ON THE U.S. FOR MILITARY DOCTRINE, LARGELY FOR OUT-OF-COUNTRY TRAINING, AND FOR LIMITED MILITARY TRANSFERS; LIKE SPARE PARTS AND CERTAIN BASIC MANUFACTURE ITEMS -- FOR EXAMPLE, MORTAR TUBES FOR THE ARMY, AND AMMUNITION FOR THEIR U.S. ORIGIN NAVAL ARMAMENT. ASSUMING SUCH TRANSFERS WERE REDUCED OR ELIMINATED ALL TOGETHER, US/MEXICAN MILITARY TIES WOULD SUFFER ACCORDINGLY. OVER THE SHORT TERM, IN

THE F-5 CASE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE MEXSECDEF WOULD, IN ALL  
LIKELIHOOD, TAKE STEPS TO SHOW HIS DISSATISFACTION  
(MEXICO 2739). IN THE LONG TERM U.S. MILITARY DOCTRINE  
AND TRAINING WOULD BE REPLACED BY THE COUNTRIES WHO  
SUPPLIED THE EQUIPMENT -- WITH A MEASURABLE DECLINE IN  
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CURRENT FAVORABLE DISPOSITION OF THE MEXICAN MILITARY TO-  
WARD THEIR U.S. COUNTERPARTS. IN ANY CASE, THE MEXICANS  
WOULD NEVER ACCEPT U.S. ADVICE ON ARMS PURCHASES FROM  
THIRD COUNTRIES OR THE INTERNAL MANAGEMENT OF THIS EQUIP-  
MENT, ETC.

E. AT THE PRESENT TIME, THERE ARE TWO PERSONNEL EXCHANGE  
BILLETS IN MEXICO AND ONE U.S. ARMY FOREIGN AREA OFFICER  
STUDENT WHO ATTENDS THE MEXICAN ARMY'S SUPERIOR WAR  
SCHOOL. THE POTENTIAL FOR MORE IS CONSIDERED LIMITED  
SINCE THERE EXIST VERY FEW WORTHWHILE BILLETS, AND IT IS  
DOUBTFUL THAT THE MEXICAN MILITARY WOULD SUPPORT MORE.  
ALL TRAINING RECEIVED BY MEXICAN MILITARY AND NAVAL PER-  
SONNEL IN U.S. SERVICE SCHOOLS IS FINANCED BY THE IMET,  
AND IS CONSIDERED ADEQUATE TO SERVE BROAD U.S. INTERESTS.  
CURRENTLY, THE PERSONNEL EXCHANGE AND TRAINING PROGRAMS  
REPRESENT IMPORTANT BUT LIMITED ROLES IN FURTHERING  
BROAD U.S. INTERESTS.

F. WE EXPECT MEXICO TO INCREASE EXPENDITURES ON MILITARY  
EQUIPMENT IN THE NEAR AND MID TERM, INTER ALIA TO MODER-  
NIZE ITS BADLY OBSOLESCENT FORCES. IN THE NEAR TERM,  
MEXICO IS PLANNING TO PURCHASE APC'S AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT  
ARTILLERY WEAPONS FROM SWITZERLAND FOR ABOUT \$20,215,  
000.00 DOLLARS. MEXICO IS ALSO CONSIDERING ACQUIRING  
NAVAL PATROL VESSELS FROM THIRD COUNTRY SOURCES.  
CURRENT INFORMATION INDICATES THAT AN EXPENDITURE OF  
ABOUT \$250 - 300 MILLION DOLLARS OVER THE NEXT THREE  
YEARS OR SO WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR THIS PURPOSE. CURRENT  
INDICATIONS ARE, THAT MEXICO WILL ALSO PURCHASE JET  
AIRCRAFT FOR ITS AIR FORCE, WHETHER OR NOT THE U.S.  
AGREES TO SELL THEM. OVER THE MID RANGE, WE WOULD EXPECT  
MORE EMPHASIS ON MODERNIZATION OF THE MEXICAN NAVY VIS-A-  
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VIS ITS COASTAL PATROL MISSION; HOWEVER, EXPENDITURES  
WILL PROBABLY NOT BURDEN THE MEXICAN BUDGET SIGNIFICANTLY.  
ALL OF THESE MOVES WILL INDEED INCREASE MEXICAN MILITARY  
CAPABILITIES, BUT WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE AIR FORCE,

THEY WILL DO NO MORE THAN REPLACE CURRENT OBSOLESCE  
EQUIPMENT. THOMPSON

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